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WOLFSDEN.*

THE author of this novel commences with a "Preliminary Flourish," as he calls it, in which he affects to burlesque a style of false rhetoric, from which he will endeavor himself to be free; but how far he succeeds, we shall show from two passages; the first taken from this introductory portion, and the other, from the latter part of the volume, both being the same subject.

First.—"Morning dawns in Wolfsden. It is time. The night has been long. The beasts in their stalls have consumed their nightly fodder, and chewed the cud of patience, while the frost has silvered their hoary brows; and hung with icicles their whiskered cheeks. The silly sheep torpidly await the morning, each with his nose buried in the woolly warmth of close-crowded mates. The feathered brood, cramped upon their high perch, have counted with wearied instincts, the last hour of night, and their high-crested lord awakes the morning with a cottage-rousing crow. Awake, Alex! Come from the land of dreams. Alex needs no second call! The bounce of his elastic feet upon the floor echoes to the last note of chanticleer. With the iron-bound bucket, he has drawn a copious cosmetic from the deep well, and dashed his ruddy cheeks and youthful limbs in unsparring profusion."

Second.—"Slowly moves the mighty panorama across the silent sky. The constellations which gem the brow of night decline in the west, for a dawning glory glimmers in the east, and the morning star heralds the day. From his high perch, chanticleer sends forth his morning summons. Soon from the chimney-top ascends a wreathed column to the sky, and from the kitchen windows the red light of a blazing fire throws its glare over the snowy landscape. The long row of patient cattle lying in their stalls, lazily uprise and stretch their long limbs, as they hear the approaching feet, and the opening of doors by the hand that feeds them. Down from their perches fly the feathered flock, all claim their share from the abundant granary, and have their claim allowed."

We are so afraid people will fall down, when we see them walking on stilts, and they do have to go all around a point so, before they can stand on it! These attempts at fine writing, which the author, evidently, prides himself on, are the great blemishes of the book. We don't like to be launched off into every chapter with such tritely-told descriptions, and commonplace morality superbly propped up. In the early part of the book, one is in a maze, and has but an indefinite idea of what is going on. We ache as the crushing weight of epithets. Later, however, his style becomes purer and more vigorous, and some of the stirring scenes are told with aptness and force.

Luckily all readers are not critics of style, and the reviewer rejoices now and then, to forget his function, and read for mere amusement, and, perhaps, profit, if the kindlier feelings are roused; and accordingly, we don't grudge the time we have given to the reading of this book.

Wolfsden is a village on the Saco river, in Maine, which has all the appurtenances of other New England villages—its rival societies with occasional revivals; its church choirs, and the Philharmonics, who belie their names, and do

nothing but quarrel; its squire, colonel, major, deacon and schoolmaster, who "boards round," its Light Infantry; its hangers-on of the dram shops, and its Washingtonians; its "neighborhoods" and "corners," and its pic-nics and gatherings. The characters of Bragly the dram-seller, and his victim, Bang, the broken-down blacksmith, are well touched up here and there. The former goes through a course of selfishness and hypocrisy, and when he has drained the pockets of the smith, he makes him work for his liquor, when finally Bang in a drunken fit, grapples with the villain, and both are pitched down a new-dug well to die. The scenes incident to the career of Alex in New York are possible, and we accordingly are not disposed to doubt their probability, inasmuch as actual occurrences are said to have given the hint. The great metropolis is not much honored in the relating of them. The chapters on Carolina and its slave-laws, are too petulantly angry, and in their spirit the author appears so utterly blinded to every thing like virtue in the South, that they fail of their effect. If we could strike out the amount of a dozen lines from the story in this part, the remainder might pass for the purposes of fiction, but these few strokes here and there betray a sinister purpose. This Southern episode is adroitly introduced, but we were sorry to have the harmony of Northern life interrupted by it.

Sympathizing damsels will glide quietly and happily out of any excitement the story may have engendered, for it all ends in the most approved manner of everybody's marrying somebody just to their mutual liking.

The publishers have done their part well, and added two wood-engravings of appropriate spirit.

COLLEGE WORDS AND CUSTOMS.*

A curious book, full of odds and ends relative to college life, a pleasant reminder of days past to the graduate, of days to come to the "Sub-Fresh," and an incomprehensible chronicle to the outsider. The Editor is a graduate of Harvard, of some five years standing, and commenced the work in his senior year, which when first published, made a book of scarcely half its present size. He apologizes for many words lacking in a refinement of sound and derivation, and for a record of many customs that would be more honored in the breach than the observance; but he thinks, not without justice, that there is nothing in language or manners too insignificant for the attention of those who are desirous of studying the diversified development of the character of man. The arrangement is alphabetical, and the pages are replete with quotations from that species of literature, which is best comprehended by college-men. There is many a page to raise a laugh, and some, alas! to make us sigh, for the absurdities of follies. There are over thirty American colleges and universities represented in some way or other, the great preponderance of matter being, however, in favor of Harvard. There is

* *Wolfsden: an Authentic Account of Things There and Thereunto Pertaining, as they Are and Have Been.* By J. B. Buxton; Phillips, Sampson & Co. 1856.

nearly as much space devoted to Yale. The references to other colleges are only occasional. The English universities are also well attended to; and so are the German in some degree. We notice he designates the clubs of the German students as *chores*, following, we suppose, Howitt, in his *German Student-life*, whereas the proper designation is the French word *corps*, which Howitt ought to have learned during his residence in Heidelberg. The German students are somewhat prone to laugh at that work, however, as the production of one uninited.

The volume is as neatly printed as Mr. Bartlett's publications usually are.

*EDITH HALE.**—This book lacks vigor, and needs the oversight of a scholar to give it something like an elegance of diction. In the opening chapter we note several gross vulgarisms, or phrases of ambiguous import. Scraps of odd learning and recendite reference, are meted out to many of the characters, sometimes in the most inopportune manner, while oftentimes they are ridiculously obtrusive. It shows but a few of the peculiar phases of village life, and these are rarely graphically portrayed. The plot and arrangement of incident deserved a better handling.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

De Quincey's Writings—Memorials. 2 vols. Ticknor & Field, Boston.

Poems, by Charles Kingsley. 1 vol. Ticknor & Field, Boston.

The Heroes, by Charles Kingsley. 1 vol. Illustrated. Ticknor & Field, Boston.

Christine; or, Woman's Trials and Triumphs, by Laura J. Custis. 1 vol. Dewitt & Devonport, New York.

Wild Western Scenes, by J. B. Jones. 1 vol. Illustrated. J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.

Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands. 1 vol. Illustrated. By Mrs. L. H. Sigourney. Munroe & Co., Boston.

Mr. Moxon, to twenty years the Poet's publisher, as old Moseley was before him (and both write poetry), has nearly deserted the Muses. He is, however, true to Mr. Tennyson, though no longer so to another born-poet, Mr. Browning. The Muses are moving to Farringdon-street. Mr. Routledge—"Strahan, Tonson, Linton of the times"—is not afraid of poetry, though Mr. Moxon is. The spirited publisher of Sir Edward Lytton's works courts true poets, and is about to publish a new poem by a true poet—by Charles Mackay—who has too long suffered his fine vein of poetry to lie unworked. We shall not, however, have occasion to quarrel with his nearly five years peace, if, as we are assured—and from what we have seen, we gather for ourselves—the muse of Mackay has gained in strength of wing and consequently in height, by the time that has elapsed between his last work and the good poem which is coming from the counter of Mr. Routledge.

A portrait of the late Mr. Lockhart, painted by Mr. Pickersgill (it is one of Mr. Pickersgill's very best portraits), has just been engraved by Geo. T. Doo, the eminent line engraver, in his most careful manner. The proud Spanish look and the winning smile of the man, have been happily caught by both painter and engraver.

* *Edith Hale; a Village Story.* By THIRAS TALMON. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1856. Dedicated to the Publishers, \$21 pp.